NAXOS
A Guided Tour of
Nationalism in the
Romantic Era
Volume 1

WEBER, CARL MARIA VON (1786–1826)

1 Oberon, J. 306, Overture
2 Der Freischutz, J. 277, Overture
3 Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73, II. Adagio ma non troppo
4 Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73, III. Rondo: Allegretto
5 Clarinet Concertino in C minor / E flat major, Op. 26, J. 109
6 Konzertstück in F minor, Op. 79, J. 282
7 Clarinet Quintet in B flat major, Op. 34 (J. 182), I. Allegro
8 Clarinet Quintet in B flat major, Op. 34 (J. 182), II. Fantasia: Adagio ma non troppo
9 Grand Duo Concertant for Clarinet and Piano in E flat major, Op. 48 (J. 204), I. Allegro con fuoco
10 Piano Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 24, J. 138, I. Allegro
11 Aufforderung zum Tanze (Invitation to the Dance), Op. 65, J. 260
12 Piano Sonata No. 2 in A flat major, Op. 39, J. 199, IV. Rondo: Moderato e molto grazioso
13 Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 49 (J. 206), I. Allegro feroce
14 Piano Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 70 (J. 287), III. Andante quasi Allegretto, consolante
15 Piano Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 70 (J. 287), IV. Finale: La Tarantella – Prestissimo
16 Rondo brillante, 'La gaité', Op. 62 (J. 252)

SCHUBERT, FRANZ (1797–1828)

17 Rosamunde, D. 797 , Ballet Music No. 2
18 Die Verschworenen (Der hausliche Krieg), D. 787, Overture
19 Mass No. 2 in G major, D. 167, Credo: Credo in unum Deum
20 Mass No. 3 in B flat major, Op. 141, D. 324, Benedictus
21 Deutsche Messe, D. 872, Zum Sanctus: Sehr langsam
22 Mass No. 5 in A flat major, D. 678, Kyrie
23 Mass No. 6 in E flat major, D. 950, Benedictus: Benedictus qui venit
24 Mass No. 6 in E flat major, D. 950, Agnus Dei: Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi
25 Symphony No. 5 in B flat major, D. 485, I. Allegro
26 Symphony No. 6 in C major, D. 589, II. Andante
27 Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759, 'Unfinished', I. Allegro moderato
28 Symphony No. 9 in C major, D. 944, 'Great', I. Andante Allegro ma non troppo
29 Overture in B flat major, D. 470
30 String Quartet No. 10 in E flat major, D. 87, I. Allegro moderato
31 String Quartet No. 12 in C minor, D. 703, 'Quartettsatz'
32 String Quartet No. 13 in A minor, D. 804, II. Andante
33 String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810, 'Death and the Maiden', I. Allegro
34 String Quartet No. 15 in G major, D. 887, Op. 161, IV. Allegro assai
35 Piano Quintet In A major, Op. 114, D. 667, 'Die Forelle' (The Trout), I. Allegro vivace
36 Piano Quintet In A major, Op. 114, D. 667, 'Die Forelle' (The Trout), IV. Thema with Variations: Andante
37 Piano Quintet In A major, Op. 114, D. 667, 'Die Forelle' (The Trout), V. Finale: Allegro giusto
38 String Quintet in C major, Op. 163, D. 956, II. Adagio
39 Piano Trio in B flat major, D. 898, I. Allegro moderato
40 Piano Trio in E flat major, D. 929, II. Andante con moto
41 Arpeggione Sonata in A minor, D. 821, I. Allegro moderato

WEBER, CARL MARIA VON (1786–1826)

Carl Maria von Weber was trained as a musician from his childhood, the son of a versatile musician who had founded his own travelling theatre company. Weber's musical gifts were fostered by his father. Travel brought the chance of varied if inconsistent study, in Salzburg with Michael Haydn (1737–1806) and elsewhere with musicians of lesser ability. A brief and idyllic period in the service of Duke Eugen of Württemberg-Öls at Karlsruhe was followed by three years as secretary to Duke Ludwig of Wurttemberg. The financial dealings of his father, who had joined him there, led to imprisonment and expulsion, and a return to a career as an active musician, at first mainly as a pianist, appearing in the principal cities of Germany. In 1817 he was invited to Dresden, where it was hoped he would establish German opera, although the first performance of *Der Freischütz* was given in Berlin in 1821. In spite of deteriorating health, the result of tuberculosis, Weber accepted a commission from Covent Garden for an English opera, *Oberon*, which was first performed there in April 1826 under the direction of the composer. The English weather could only further damage his health, and he died during the night of 4 June on the eve of his intended departure for Germany.

OPERA (Tracks 1-2)
Weber's achievement was both considerable and influential. In German opera he had opened a new and rich vein that subsequent composers were to explore. The opera *Der Freischütz* ('The Marksman') blends many of the ingredients typical of German Romanticism, and was a landmark work in the new 'national' school of opera. His operas show imaginative orchestration and lyrical facility.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC AND CONCERTOS (Tracks 3-6)
Weber wrote two symphonies and a number of works for chorus and orchestra. He also wrote two piano concertos and a Konzertstück for piano and orchestra, as well as a Horn Concertino and Bassoon Concerto. His two concertos and the concertino for clarinet were written for the clarinettist Heinrich Baermann. The famous *Aufforderung zum Tanze* ('Invitation to the Dance') is well known in an orchestral version of a work originally written for piano.

CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 7-9)
Weber was not prolific in terms of his chamber music, but he did write a Clarinet Quintet and a Grand Duo Concertant for clarinet and piano, successors to the clarinet concertos and concertino for Baermann. He also composed a Piano Quartet and a Trio for piano, cello and flute.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 10-16)
By far the best known of Weber's pieces for piano is the *Aufforderung zum Tanz* ('Invitation to the Dance'), a charming programme piece following the progress of an invitation to dance. Weber's other piano compositions include four sonatas for the instrument, numerous smaller pieces in various genres (including ecossaises, fughettas and variations), and some music for four hands.

SCHUBERT, FRANZ (1797–1828)

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna in 1797, the son of a schoolmaster. At home he had some lessons in music from his father and from an older brother, followed by sound musical training and general education from the age of nine as a chorister of the imperial court chapel. By the age of thirteen Schubert was already writing music, including string quartets for performance at home and his first songs. In the winter of 1816 Schubert moved into lodgings with his friend Franz von Schober, a young man of some means, who had persuaded Schubert to devote himself to music. Nine months later he had rejoined his family, until the following summer, when more congenial employment offered as music-master to the two young daughters of Count Johann Esterházy at his Hungarian summer residence at Zseliz. Throughout this period Schubert continued to compose music of all kinds. 1822 brought a break in the life that Schubert had been sharing with his friends. Venereal infection and serious illness compelled him to return home to his father's house, which he became too ill, for the moment, to leave, until in May 1823 he was admitted to hospital. In 1828 he moved to the house of his brother Ferdinand, but there grew increasingly ill, dying on the afternoon of 19 November.

STAGE WORKS (Tracks 17-18)
Schubert wrote around nine operas, six *Singspiel* and some incidental music for the theatre. His best-known compositions of this kind include the music for the unsuccessful play *Rosamunde*, *Fürstin von Zypern* ('Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus'), performed in Vienna in 1823. The ballet music and entracte from *Rosamunde* are particularly well known.

CHURCH MUSIC (Tracks 19-24)
Among the various works Schubert wrote for church use, particular mention may be made of the second of his six complete settings of the Mass. He also wrote a setting of the Stabat Mater and the Magnificat, an oratorio, and several hymns and psalms.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (Tracks 25-29)
Well-known symphonies from the ten or so Schubert wrote (not all of which were completed) include the 'Great' C major Symphony and the charming Fifth Symphony. The famous 'Unfinished' Symphony was written in 1822. He also wrote a number of orchestral overtures.

CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 30-41)
Of Schubert's approximately 17 string quartets, the Quartet in A minor and the Quartet in D minor ('Death and the Maiden') are the most familiar. The Piano Quintet 'Die Forelle' ('The Trout') includes a movement of variations on that song, while the great C major String Quintet of 1828 is of unsurpassable beauty. He also wrote an octet, two piano trios and a single-movement *Notturno*.

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